

# Questions About Monking

Tommy's Responses

September 2007

\*This text was pulled from the Team Quitters forum thread titled "Questions about monking". The full length text can be found at the link provided at the end of this document. The following excerpt outlines only Tommy's responses to questions given in the thread.

Hey guys, I know a bunch of people have discussed some relevant issues in monking recently and have asked for my opinions. Since I started school last week, I haven't really had much time to do many write-ups on the forums, but hopefully this post will satisfy anyone with any questions.

There's generally a lot of people who make posts that say that they really aren't interested in the material and don't want to invest the time into reading a discussion like this, and so, I'm just telling you in the beginning this time that I'm not going to force or expect you to read my posts. I simply write them for those who have expressed interest and perhaps some others who might find insight along the way.

As always, if I'm unclear about anything or you have any follow-ups, please feel free to ask. Also, if you disagree with something or want to take the discussion further, I encourage you to do so as well.

I just have a series of quotes here, each of which I will offer my input on. They are listed in no particular order.

*"u dont need a high energy set."* – HardcoreYo...

I made a point to quote this with little or no text early in the thread to show how absurd the statement was. Weapon swapping really is easy enough, and swapping to high sets for casts is by far the easiest and most crucial swap to accomplish.

Let me just try to lay this out as simply as possible. You are monking. You cast spells. They cost energy. Eventually, you cast too much or your energy gets drained, so a four pip set is no longer going to support your casting. You swap to a high energy set (+15 energy wand, +27 energy focus) and cast your spell(s). Immediately after the cast, you swap back to a normal energy set. The next time you need to cast, if you are still in "negative energy", you swap to your high set again and cast, immediately swapping back down once again. There are two possible outcomes at this point, assuming you are being very communicative with your team about your situation at all times: your team will either recover, and your health and energy bars will stabilize, allowing you to return to your "normal energy" sets, *or* you will continue to take heavy damage and the energy in your high set will diminish, leading you to call for a team fallback.

Either of these scenarios is essentially a success for the monks. You did everything that you could, and gave absolutely everything that you had. If you did a good enough job negating and healing damage, then something else about your team strategy is going to have to improve once you have recovered and are ready to reset the battle (this is assuming that your team hadn't full wiped and you were able to utilize your NPCs, which should ideally be the case).

Not swapping to a high set when taking high damage, on the other hand, will almost always lead to a failure for the monks. When a monk confines him or herself to one static energy pool, there is no good measure of how much longer they can sustain the team without allowing a death. After a push or burst of pressure, they may find themselves with low or no energy in their only set, and that will lead to not



having enough energy to save a team member. If this becomes the case, a full team wipe is likely, as "energy clicks" should never be allowed to occur, and if they do, a chain reaction normally follows. One way that some monks try to prevent this is to call low energy when in reality they still have an excess of energy in their normal sets. This leads to their team falling back prematurely, either all the way into their base for a reset, or at least linebacking to relieve pressure, while letting up all of their own. Falling back while low energy on a single set and no offensive pressure once again risks "energy clicks", as the other team will be all-out offense and will still be able to damage through your linebacking, risking the chance that energy will indeed run out and you will have insufficient reserves to save a teammate.

Thus, one very overlooked benefit of the high energy set is the ability to have some kind of objective measure of energy, rather than guessing when your one set is going to run out. If this is where you want to view the high set as an "emergency set", then feel free, as whatever you call it, you'll know exactly how much you can give your team until you can't heal any longer. Communication is key, as if your team is going to need just a little more time to score a kill or two, it will be worth it to stay engaged on a dry energy pool. Obviously, many offensive players get cocky and think they are doing better than they actually are, so there's a high level of trust that must be involved in this communication, or you can just make up for it yourself with your own observations and judgment. More practically than being able to kill the other team in time, you will be able to support your team during the fallback at the very least, in due time so that there's never a great risk of taking deaths. The judgments of when to fall back are going to be hard at first, but as you get better at evaluating what your energy set(s) mean, as well as the threat from the opposing team based on their strategy and build, you will be able to support your team for much longer periods of time.


The common misconception about energy sets is that once you swap to one, you're stuck on it. Meaning that once you have swapped to a two pip energy set, that is going to be your energy recovery until you can swap back into lower sets. This is where the whole idea of the "emergency set" comes in, and people think that once their energy pool is exhausted, it's just going to come back twice as slowly. That couldn't be farther from the truth. If you are swapping to your high set *only* to cast as you should, then you are still sitting at four pips when you are not casting, meaning that your energy regen rate is going to remain constant while simply offering you a larger reserve pool. Under no circumstance should any monk, or any player at any position for that matter, be sitting on a two energy pip set for any extended period of time. The scenario that I described above should really be the only way that you're using your high set. What then, is the downside to a high set if it only offers more security, objectivity, and energy? The answer is that you are indeed losing energy every time that you cast in a high set, but only at a rate of .67 energy per second spent *casting*, not in the set itself, since you won't be sitting in it. There is also the time that it takes to swap weapon sets, but that's so elementary that the time it takes should be negligible. If you're new to it and it's hard for you to do quickly, then all it means is that you're going to need to call fallbacks more preemptively.

I personally will spend a great deal of time in matches on my high set and won't think twice about it. I always view my energy as  $x$  of 72, not  $x$  of 35, 40, or 42, simply because I know it's available to me. Although that swap offers by far the least efficiency, it still offers staying power at the stand or



otherwise. Often times, during offensive pushes, I will exhaust my high set because I am removing conditions, hexes, and maintaining veils. I play very offensive-mindedly, so if I see my team pushing well, or if they inform me that they have the opportunity to, I don't hesitate to heal and cast out of my high set. Monks are offensive catalysts, and being able to full push into an opposing team with an Aegis up and prots flying around is the ultimate way to score kills and win games. If we are taking enough damage to push me into my high set and my team is still pushing, then I'm going to throw up a 15 energy Aegis in my high set anyway. You don't only lose energy when doing something like that. The reason that you bring and use skills at all is because you believe that the energy costs and casting times will be made up for by the benefits. In this case, the blocks from Aegis while you push into their team, NPCs, or base outweigh the energy you had to spend, a net gain, which will actually help to get you heighten your energy rather than push you deeper into your high set.

The only reason that I ever really call to pull out is due to threat level, where a team is executing a massive push with AoE damage in choke points, full monk attacking, and absurd amounts of instantaneous damage. This needs to happen at the same time as energy runs out on the high set in order to truly be a threat. Most of the time, I can sit in a high set for 10 or more minutes and not feel it,

as was the case against 



Fragility

• 5  1  5 



Core

Hex Spell. For 8..18..21 seconds, target foe takes 5..17..21 damage each time that foe suffers or recovers from a new Condition. (Attrib: Illusion Magic)

in the most recent tournament when they were running hexes, and we didn't take a death in the first twenty minutes, going on to win at VoD. This happened once against versus hexes recently in a game against DF, although that was largely due to their lack of direct damage (they only had one physical damage dealer). The efficiency of the skills that you use, as well as how you use them, will often be enough to let you recover from any high pressure periods, at least eventually.

It's a personal belief that a high energy set is used for recovery at the stand as well as to facilitate offensive pushes, not to keep a team alive in an emergency situation. Although that is one of its uses, viewing that as the primary focus of the set limits a team offensively, as it either lets up pressure completely or disallows a greater number of pushes with longer durations.

*"Ok so I'm having a hard time seeing how anyone would take Spirit Bond over PS (assuming you're not running both on one bar, which would be weird).*



*As far as I can tell, PS lasts longer, is more likely to prevent damage and is just generally cooler. Unless you know for sure that your ally is going to take 60+ in the next 10 hits, it seems a safer bet for energy efficiency and preventing damage to go with PS, surely?*

*Anyway, I've just never understood why people take spirit bond so I'd like to know what you guys think."*  
- Limbo

You basically answered your own question through your phrasing and the conditionality that you made sure to point out. The only misconception that you had was that Prot Spirit is more likely to prevent damage. Spirit Bond will not only reduce damage strikes of 60+, but also damage strikes that *would have been* 60+ if not already stacked with other procs, such as Prot Spirit, Shield of Absorption, or Shielding Hands. Also, most players run between 570 and 640 health these days, meaning that they will both be triggering at around the 60 damage mark, so if anything, Spirit Bond is more likely to trigger randomly, which is what I think you were getting at. I think you've confused Spirit Bond's mechanics, since it's not going to heal if your ally takes 60+ damage *within* the next ten hits, but rather heal the next ten times that your ally takes 60+ damage.

As for the part of your phrasing that I said answered your question, it was the part about only using Spirit Bond when you *know for sure* that your ally is going to take more than 60 damage. Well, yes, that's essentially the only time that you're going to want to be using Spirit Bond or Prot Spirit anyway, in a proactive attempt to pre-prot a spike or high damage train. Spamming them randomly on targets taking damage will never prove effective, so it wouldn't really matter which you were using as it will just come out to chance anyway. As far as the duration goes, it doesn't really matter, since they will both only be triggering at the beginning of their durations anyway, and the added length will only make a difference if the opposing team is bad and doesn't switch targets, or at VoD for NPC/incidental damage.

*"Serious Monk question: Tommy, why do you choose Ranger as your secondary?"* – Buffalo

Dust trap.

No, actually, it's just to look cool. Every other secondary class has, or has had, some kind of useful skill for monks to use, while ranger is just a trash collection. Natural Stride or Melandru's Resilience don't count because they are just funny to use and don't actually have any kind of purpose. For the record, though, I do normally spec 3 points into Marksmanship and 1 point into Beast Mastery.

*"How do people weapon swap effeciently during battle? Like whenever i try to weapon swap as a monk, the prot comes too late and i end up spending a bunch of energy trying to save someone who could have been easily pre-protted. Is it just watching the field more closely? Because i can never really find a time that i can swap without missing something. Any tips? I am a very bad monk and all my monking experiance is in ra if that has anything to do with it."* - ax



Practice, practice, practice. Practice in HA, RA, TA, AB, GvG, and wherever else you can. The goal of this is to eventually make your weapon swapping automatic, so that as soon as you think to use a certain skill, your fingers swap to the appropriate set beforehand without any kind of thought. Associate certain skills with certain weapon swaps, the weapon swaps that maximize the efficiency of those specific skills (40% FC 20% ench staff for Prot spells, 40% FC 40% SR wand+focus for Heal spells, etc). Once you have the association ingrained far enough into your brain, you can just do the weapon swap and spell cast as one fluid motion, pressing the swap key a millisecond before casting the spell. Do this on each and every cast, for each and every spell, and even between casts, as the maximum efficiency when not casting comes from an entirely defensive weapon set.

If you're talking about the technical aspect of swapping, then I really believe that it just comes down to preference. Since I use a largely default interface and key settings, I use the F1-F4 keys to weapon swap and 1-6, h, and y to cast spells. If I'm anticipating a cast, my hand will hover over the weapon swap keys as well as the spell keys, and once I do need to swap, I hit the swap key and the cast key in a single synchronized motion, obviously swapping with a minimal fraction of a second before casting. Where your swap keys and cast keys are on your keyboard is not a big concern, as long as you get used to using them together. It does mean that you have to press two buttons instead of one to cast each spell, but this will be done almost instantly. As you practice, the speed with which you will be able to execute this motion will increase, and there will be less of a delay between identifying the proper swap/spell and the fulfillment of the action. Once again, it's all about making it automatic.

*"Why spend all the time weapon swapping when you should be healing."* - Beo

Unless you're healing *non-stop*, literally, there is always time to weapon swap. It takes the smallest fraction of a second before a cast and the same amount of time afterward. It should be possible to multi-task quite easily and efficiently with weapon swapping, casting, and moving, especially when the weapon swapping and casting have become one fluid motion, as described above. I've heard a lot of monks talk about not wanting to weapon swap because they have to click on their weapon sets and that takes away from other things, but if you can just achieve a configuration that you're comfortable, that shouldn't be a problem. Clicking really should never be used on something where reaction time and speed is so vital, unless you're dedicating a great deal of attention and effort to it, like clicking to move or clicking the party bar, both much more important functions than weapon swapping.

*"But Tommy, how can you keep on your energy with your current duals monks?"* - Breizh

This quote alone might be taken out of context somewhat since the question was asked so long ago. For some background, this was after discussing weapon setups on certain monk bars, when I listed my LoD monk bar as RoF, LoD, SB, Kiss, Dismiss, Veil, SoA, Aegis.

Well, I established the bar based on my philosophy and personal style when monking, which was essentially "If you don't take damage, you won't need energy". Basically, the energy management on the bar is the efficiency of the skills themselves and the efficiency based on how they are used. I've been



shocked when going to guest with a guild and they tell me “You don’t need Aegis”. My first response is to ask them whether they already have three copies on midliners or something. No one has ever responded ‘yes’ to that question, so I insist on bringing it anyway, even if I have the only one. The reason for that is because passive skills like Aegis are efficient in themselves. Even though they have a steep energy cost (well, not so much any more), you’re using the skill based on the assumption that the damage it will negate will come out to more than 15 (now 10) energy out of your pool, resulting in a net energy gain instead of loss. This was discussed in more detail above. The reason that I’ve singled out Aegis first is because it’s the skill that monks have been most hesitant to run on its own because it “needed” energy management.

The next way that the bar(s) maximize your energy is via proper usage of prots, both big prots like SB, PS, and SoD, as well as small prots such as Guardian, SoA, and Shielding Hands. This keeps in line with the “don’t take damage” mentality, as prots will obviously reduce your need to heal. Everyone knows that and most people utilize it rather well. However, most builds normally don’t run the sheer quantity of prots that we have been, especially not small prots, and leads to the negation of not only spike skills/spells, but also incidental and “auto” damage. Whereas pre-protting spikes with big prots spells stays consistent across all monk builds and playstyles, this one takes away even more damage. The efficiency of a single small prot spell might be minimal, and it certainly varies based on the amount of damage that a teammate takes throughout the duration, but in the end, it will still always do something to reduce damage and negate the need for heals. In the end, not allowing your team to take damage will always reduce deaths more than relying on pure healing will, regardless of how much or little damage is actually stopped. This might be a bigger drain on energy, but it actually increases efficiency, at least based on a post from a while back where I defined efficiency not by energy and team standards, but by minimizing individual deaths.

On the other side, it may actually help your energy a lot more than energy management skills or heals will anyway. Big prots should only be used when the condition for damage reduction will be met guaranteed; small prots can be used in all other scenarios. In those “toss-up cases” where you are using small prots, it’s often hit-or-miss where it will negate a minimal amount of damage or enough damage to be worth an entire pool of energy (okay, maybe that’s a slight exaggeration, but you get the point). It’s kind of like winning the lottery a lot of the time, but with much better odds. Although individual small prots may fail and not do as much as you had desired, the returns in the long run will be positive and the expected value of each individual prot will be higher than the energy cost, despite the distribution of damage negation. Graphically, the damage reduced by small prots would show a high frequency of small values, drop down in the middle, and then slope back up to represent many high values as well, with the mean landing above the amount that could be healed for the same energy cost.

Now obviously, this is all under the assumption that you are using these spells as intelligently as possible in order to get the most out of them. This makes watching the battlefield and map all the more important, as you are not simply scoping out spikes any longer, but also “auto” damage. It will require you to constantly watch physical damage for opportunities to shut it down, with will be rather frequent. Practice with this will lead to more efficient usage of all of your spells, as well as increase your field



awareness in general.

The final reason that I choose to run a bar with no explicit energy management is probably the biggest and, in my opinion, the most obvious. I like skills that do something. I like skills that are their own skills and have their own unique uses. Explicit energy management skills such as glyph of lesser energy simply allow you to use your current skills more often. While this is fine, and even preferred, on bars with SoD or some other high energy cost, super powerful elite, on it, it's really not worth it when each of your skills is situational. Pumping more energy into your current skills means that you are sacrificing potential efficiency that could be obtained by using better suited spells. It's hard to say where to draw the line on that, because certainly, if I could have only five skills on my bar and the ability to use them non-stop, it would be a very tempting offer. However, I believe that none of the current non-elites are powerful enough to warrant the sacrifice of space on a bar for a greater usage of less efficient skills. The one argument that could have been made at one point was 15 energy Aegis, but I didn't even think it was worth it back then, and it certainly isn't now that it's been knocked down in energy cost. Sticking with the small prot versus big prot usage example, energy management spells would basically allow you to cast Spirit Bond or Prot Spirit on whichever teammate was taking damage that could potentially be negated. However, there is no guarantee that they will even have any effect at all, as the prerequisites are fairly high (60 damage taken for SB, 60-64 damage taken for PS), and they generally are not worth using unless you are positive that their conditions will be met for sure, as stated above. The other option would be spending the excess energy on heals, but I've already stated how I feel about those. They're just simply not as efficient as prots, and you should have plenty in that department to scrap up the spare damage, especially with LoD. So if the skills that you fuel with energy management just aren't doing a complete or efficient job, then why pump them instead of equipping smaller, yet more situationally effective spells in that last slot?

I'm going to discuss the ultimate example of "skills that do nothing" or "skills that aren't their own skills" later on in this post. At least I think I am since there was an entire thread started about it, and I can't imagine having passed over it without a quote.

*"[In Response to Tommy quote: 'You can go ahead and monk (or play any class) with 40/42/47 energy. I'll stick to 72. Not really much of a thinker there.'] Would it be so bad to go with just one +15 swap for high energy? Such as a +15 wand and a w/e focus? I've been doing that ever since Brett rofflestomped me on my high set: pleaking LoD and e-burning the rest of my energy pool.*

*I know the argument: VoD, an extra 15 energy could win the game, etc. But I'm much more comfortable with only 15 energy exposed on a high set. I could switch up to +30 at VoD, or if there is another situation where absolutely critical heals are needed." - Bryon*

It's not necessarily bad. It was a common practice back in the day when energy denial was heavy and monks were bad to run four swaps purely for energy. Now, granted, they weren't maximizing their utility, but it did have some effect. One swap for low energy via negative energy weapon and focus, one set for normal energy, one set with +15, and one set with +30. The players could just build their way up



through the energy pools as their energy diminished, receiving only a .33 energy per second penalty from the +15 set instead of the normal .67 energy per second, as well as only exposing a small pool for denial. Then, when you do need the highest set, you can start swapping into that rather than the moderate energy set, and still have a minimal amount exposed, working your way back up as your energy recovers.

It's still a rather useful idea, and if that's something that you're really afraid of, then I would highly recommend it, since high sets are extremely vulnerable to interrupts or denial. I don't know that I would ever completely drop the 72 energy set, since it would definitely be realistic to use both while avoiding the exposure that you're concerned about. I don't think that I would ever do that personally, since I love both of my efficiency sets and need at least my defensive and high sets, but if you aren't super, super attached to each of your four sets, then it would most likely work out favorably.

*"Infuse is bad." - Tommy*

There was some discussion about my statement at the time that I made it, since I've noticed that a decent number of teams still equip Infuse Health. Let me start off by saying that I don't think that Infuse is necessarily a bad skill. I just think that it's not entirely necessary. With the abundance of prot spells going around these days, the amounts of passive defense, and most importantly the emphasis being put on pre-protting spikes, Infuse simply does not come out to be the most effective spell in the vast majority of circumstances.

I ran Infuse on my bar for quite some time, and it would always be worth throwing around just because it was there. However, one day, I just decided to see how far I could get with pre-prots alone. What happened was that I didn't see the need to use Infuse for an entire week and had forgotten that it was on my bar. It also made me far more energy-efficient, heightened my awareness, and allowed me to be more proactive in calling tactics.

Now clearly, some monks are very experienced and have become quite good at pre-protting, enough to take away the majority of a spike if both monks land their spells in advance, but some aren't. In order to rely solely on prots, you need two trustworthy players who are capable of catching every spike, and that means that the burden is also going to fall largely on the off-monk, usually SoD these days. If synergy is developed well enough, it will often lead to the ideal scenario that I described above.

*"Is sig of devo good or bad? 2 second activation for only 89ish heal? worth it?" - cammy*

Oh boy. My favorite skill in the world. Signet of Devotion.

Okay, here's the thing. Signet of Devotion is not its own spell. It's used for one of two reasons: energy management or to fuel hex removal, perhaps both. What I mean about it not being its own skill is that there are alternatives out there that are infinitely better. And it's not the kind of situational choices that I described above, but rather, there are spells that will always be better and are exact substitutes, Gift of



Health for example. Signet of Devotion is a poor excuse for Gift if you are simply looking at the heal numbers. They have the same recharge, and Gift has a significantly higher heal, gets the divine favor bonus, and has a much shorter casting time. The only benefit of Sig of Devo is that it's free. So what does that mean? Basically, it means that you sacrifice what your skill does for energy. Like I said in an earlier section, Signet of Devotion is the ultimate example of sacrificing a skill that actually does something for a more "secure" energy situation. Thus, the first use, energy management. Why is this energy management unnecessary? See the section regarding the issue above. The same concepts apply.

Before I get onto the second use of the skill, hex removal, let me take the time out to explore the question "Is Signet of Devotion really free?". I know it sounds unnecessarily philosophical, but it really is looking into. The answer is no. What I mean is that at the very least, you're not quite getting the heal that you subscribed to when casting Sig of Devo. I'll go over why somewhat quickly. The first reason is that every build runs an LoD monk, and that is used for filling up multiple party bars, especially topping them off. Sig of Devo can only be used to top off bars and not make them go from low to high quickly (like Gift can), so a lot of the health that would be healed by Devo will get mopped up by the incessant LoD spam anyway. The casting time is two seconds, and with aftercast, it is a 2.75 second investment. Often times, when monks use Sig of Devo, warriors will switch to attack them and they will either have to cancel and get nothing or suffer through taking damage themselves to get the spell off. I've seen Sig of Devo lead to such tanking far too many times, and it's almost unavoidable. This is especially true since Sig of Devo is used most frequently when the team is under pressure and the monks are low on energy. If the monks are low on energy, they try to make up for it by casting a "free" spell often. At the same time, since the opposing team is applying the heavy pressure, they will primarily be attacking monks, meaning the damage taken will also increase with the need to cast for the purpose of energy management. Also having to do with the casting time is the potential for missed procs. Big pre-procs on spikes as well as small pre-procs on "auto" damage may be missed, or at least made less energy-efficient, due to the delay of the long cast of Sig of Devo. For these reasons, the Signet will not be doing exactly how much you want it to. The amount healed from LoD, amount of damage taken while casting, and damage negation forgone due to not proccing must all be subtracted from the base amount that Signet of Devotion is said to heal for in order to come up with a more accurate number. Of course, this is the case with nearly all skills, but the situation is never nearly as severe as that of Devotion.

The second use for Signet of Devotion was to power hex removal via Deny Hexes. Hmm, that sounds alright, right? A slightly effective heal that also adds to hex removal? Well sure, but only if you could have 16 skills on your bar. Since we already know that Sig of Devo is never being used primarily for the heal itself, it's going to be just as good as its secondary function. So how does it fare as hex removal? Well, objectively, it's really not too bad. It's great against hex teams because it can remove not only the top hex, but the important ones buried underneath as well. And that's not to mention that the second hex removal is free, since it goes along with the first, which would always cost five energy without regard to the number of hexes removed.

The downside is that it's simply not practical. The first reason that you're devoting an entire slot on your bar to a second, or even third, hex removal spell. Now clearly, hex removal is good, but if you're using



that many spaces on your bar for it, you're clearly passing up something that could be far superior. The next problem is that it's not going to get any additional utility (multiple hexes removed) against teams that aren't running a pure hex stack build. A normal team with scattered hexes, such as water snares, blurred vision, and diversion, will only leave one useful hex on a target at a time. A second real hex removal such as Remove Hex or Holy Veil would be better in this case since it could be focused, and the target as well as the timing could be spaced accordingly. Another argument against the skill for removal purposes is the existence of a clearly superior alternative: Divine Spirit. I don't want to get into the reasons why it is so much better, as I'm sure it's apparent to most people out there, and is often brought as the first DF spell to fuel Deny anyway. Any more skills past Divine Spirit just make you desperate to bring any skill at all to deny you of skill slots and diminish the marginal utility of the conditionality of Deny Hexes. Now the most obvious reason that Sig of Devo does not work as hex removal, even against a pure hex stack team, is the two second cast time and five second recharge. In order to pull three hexes with Deny every time is recharged, you are going to need to cast Sig of Devo, a 2.75 second investment, once every 13 seconds, and then you only have a five second window in which to use Deny. Now that means that you are giving up whatever you would be doing otherwise in those 2.75 seconds to cast a skill that preps your hex removal and you could be spending them maximizing efficiency of procs, kiting, or something else useful. It also gives you a five second window since the recharge is so short. There may not be a sufficient stack of three hexes worth removing in those three seconds, and you won't be able to split your removals or target them on the individual players you want at the specific times that you want, you'll be forced to use it since prepping it again would mean another 2.75 seconds of prep time and again only a five second window. You also may get pressured in that five second window (you did just waste the previous 2.75 seconds, after all), and not be allowed to cast Deny, as you may be getting trained, or your team may be taking so much damage that it needs to be healed or propped immediately.

With all of those reasons that I'm not a fan of Signet of Devotion right now, let me just say that I never think Sig of Devo was good. Not in the WoH days, Boon Prot days, Blessed Light days, or at any time. The flaws of the skill have always been the same, and it's at least slightly better now that it has a second purpose in hex removal due to the recent buff of Deny. The metagames and views of monking back then may have allowed you to get away with it with losing less than you do now, but the effect was never entirely positive, or at least not high enough to warrant equipping and using. That's all in my opinion, of course.

*"Im saying theres possibilities for a smite skill to be put in. GoH is good yes but im just wondering if a smite skill like reversal of dmg or something would work at all, could possibly turn out good." - thegetbacker*

What would you be getting out of Reversal of Damage that you wouldn't be getting out of Reversal of Fortune? You would be passing up the considerable heal that RoF offers, and getting in return some unfocused, small damage. Your spec isn't going to be very high, so the damage numbers won't be game-changing, the recharge is going to be considerably more noticeable, and the actual damage that is put out is going to be random. It's not like the damage is actually going to coordinate itself with your offense



and spike or assist targets. It's just going to be thrown out on whoever is attacking you. Since they're apply pressure by attacking or casting themselves, chances are that they are not the ones on the other team being pressured, and the damage will be lost.

*"What do you think about a Monk/Dervish playing with Conviction and Armor of Sanctity in a Condoover(with tainted)?" - g3rsi*

That's a very cool combination, actually, and I think with Tainted and Aegis in the build, it would prove rather effective. The problem that I would foresee is having to waste two skill slots on something that you can't control. The efficiency of those skills relies on the enemies attacking you, and there's not much you can do to induce that. Along with that, it means that you won't be able to equip skills that would help your allies more in varied situations, and as you might be able to tell from some of the statements above, I really like being in complete control of the situation without leaving it up to chance or the actions of another player or team. It would also mean that you would likely have to move the Aegis over to a midline character, and while the Tainted Necro might be ideal, you might have some other plans for his bar.

Now that said, I still think the combination would be rather effective, and so it's worth a try. You certainly need the right build to play it in, with a lot of off-monk and midline support, or at the very least, you can use it to dominate Team Arena.

Now I'll open the floor to questions, comments, criticisms, and complaints.

Thor\_Obliterator wrote:

*"You seem to place complete and total confidence on prots over healing, most specifically in your argument against infuse. What happens when the other team is running what I was just running recently, 2 shatters, 2 drains, and 1-2 rending touches? There were many spikes we were able to push through that could have been stopped if the other monk had infused, instead of blindly relying on the stability of his preprots."*

Oh, did I not include that? My bad. It was certainly in my notes. And I'm fairly sure you were the team that made me think of the argument. I'll throw that in there, I don't know how I left it out.

Bravo wrote:

*"Criticism: I don't recommend turning the paper in to a professor without edits."*

Haha yeah, to be honest, it was TL;DR for me to want to edit. I just wanted to be done with it. Maybe later.

Kenshin wrote:



*“So, my question is; what is the optimal point [probably measured in terms of energy] at which you call a retreat to minimize team deaths? Or is this just completely situational, which I am thinking it is.”*

I couldn't tell you, to be honest. You were right about it being completely situational. The amount of time that I spend in a normal game monking with 0-10 energy in my high set terrifies most teams. If I'm completely out of energy and living from single cast to single cast, it means that the opposition just isn't enough of a threat. I'm more scared of a team pumping out immense damage all over every player than a team that takes away all of my energy, regardless of my pool levels in both scenarios. An increase in damage taken is a better indicator of when you need to pull back rather than energy level, although it does have an impact when evaluating the damage taken.

Zuranthium wrote:

*“I do disagree a bit with you saying Signet of Devotion wasn't good for Blessed Light Monks (the Mo/A variety anyway). The prot spells of today weren't available back then - Guardian and Shielding Hands weren't as good and SoA didn't exist. Combine that with having no LoD around to take care of incidental damage (yeah, Heal Party did that, but sometimes your flag runner was back at the base and not within range) and I think Signet of Devotion was worthwhile.*

*Also, you didn't address how Signets ignore most Mes effects. If you want sit in your negative set for a bit to avoid e-denial, a Signet is the only thing you can use. Signets can't be P-drained/leaked/returned. They aren't affected by Migraine/Shame/Dazed. While I do agree that Sig Devo isn't great, you should probably include that within the argument.”*

Point taken. The lack of alternatives did certainly increase the viability of the skill, since although it didn't do too much, it still did more than the other available skills. The effect of the skill was still the same, and still low, so I had chosen to go with additional hex removal spells in those days, but obviously, either of those was going to be less effective than our current choices. I don't think I could ever say that it was entirely good, but you definitely have a point about it being one of the "best of the worst" skills, or at least more usable and practical in purpose than other options.

As far as ignoring mesmer effects, I was making the assumption that that goes along with "usage when your team is getting pressured", which could lead to disastrous results. Of course, that isn't always the case, and Sig of Devo is nice for that. However, I don't see things like Shame to be a huge threat, and if it's being used on a spike, Sig of Devo is going to be less efficient than actually casting through the Shame. Not getting interrupted is questionable, since there are still many skill interrupts floating out there, like d-shot, savage shot, leech sig, cry, d-chop, d-blow, and d-dagger. Now p-drain and p-leak are still big ones out there, so you're right, they do deserve mention.

Those ideas make the skill look a little bit better, both currently and historically, and while the skill may be better than alternatives and get around some common spell counters, it still just doesn't really do anything itself, so it once again just comes down to the base effect of the skill, regardless of the bells and whistles.



Capitan wrote:

*"This is probably going to sound very stupid, but aren't weapon swaps affected by aftercast and lag too (and reaction time)? I personally find to cast one spell in my high set, I'm often at least 1,5-2 seconds in my high set. This costs me quite a lot of regen in the long run."*

Yes, they are, and that makes it all the more important to be energy efficient once in the high set. It also emphasizes communication, as it's going to be harder for you to cast once in the high set, and your teammates need to offer you assistance in order to get out of it.

vanquisher wrote:

*"teleport spike, Shadow Shroud spike, various caster spikes, Blood Spike"*

All extinct. Not that I know why, but I really don't want to bring a skill that counters a build that I would never possibly see. Teleport spike was the one exception, as I played against it once in the most recent monthly tournament, when Be Team ran it against MoJ. They ran Shadow Prison on a warrior instead of Ride the Lightning (maybe because of the 10 sec lower recharge?) and the rest was ranger/caster damage. Keen observation of the field and anticipation still paid off, as Chris and I would take turns counting down [be]'s spike in vent, so that Spirit bond+SoD+RoF still did the job. The game was flawless until they scored a couple of spike kills once we had pushed into their boat, but those were too late to matter.

vanquisher wrote:

*"If I remember correctly, the reason you actually started taking Infuse on your B-Light Monk in the first place was because neither you nor Tom could effectively pre-prot vs. teleport spike, and understandably so. The clincher was that at the time I don't believe we were running an Ele with Flash at the stand, so Infuse was the natural choice for stopping spikes. I personally believe the only change is the simplifying of spike calling to a point where you do not require Infuse to be effective against it, however, as I said, the removal of Infuse as a staple from Monk bars is just an invitation to bring back old spike Builds that were hampered by it."*

Sure it is. But no one has been able to do so successfully. If teams want to bring back old spike builds, then they might be able to do so, but that's not the only reason that infuse has fallen out of favor. Team builds in general have evolved so that splittability is almost always built in automatically, and disruption is overloaded (mostly due to the desire to shutdown defensive builds, but those would still crush any kind of spike).

Buffalo wrote:

*"I still think Signet of Rejuvenation is a good energy management skill."*



Sure it is. Whether or not energy management is good is the real question. Each skill on your skillbar that is only meant to fuel the existing skills and not have merits of its own is just overflowing with opportunity cost.

La Docteur wrote:

*“The heal on cure hex is nice but you can get fucked up if your not prevailed when migrane hits you”*

As far as Cure Hex goes, I've never been a big fan of skills with unfocused utility benefits. I may have worded that confusingly, but what I basically mean is that when I expect a skill effect, I expect to be able to direct it myself and get the benefit where I want it. Cure Hex is one of those skills that looks pretty on paper because it serves as a hex removal and a Gift, essentially. However, you're not allowed to direct the heal, and so it just ends up getting thrown around on anyone who has a hex on them, regardless whether or not it will be effective at all. This could lead to unnecessary healing, which is not necessarily bad, but the opportunity cost of giving up veil for it is too high to warrant running in my opinion.

Bravo recently asked me about Healing Ribbon, which, on paper, looks like a nice skill, much like Cure Hex. Unfortunately, it has the same problem, as it relies on chance or coincidence in order to gain its full effect.

Bum wrote:

*“how do you use veil effectively  
cos im shit at knowing when to pre-veil  
and i end up just maintaining it on pointless targets and wasting my energy  
any tips?”*

Preveil:

Monks against pure spike teams

Warriors/monks against pure hex teams

Warriors against balanced teams during heavy offensive pushes

Flag runners who are pushing the flag in and getting focused on

B-Surge eles when your team is starting to feel pressure and they are getting harrassed

Snare characters who are pushing up to apply slows and pressure to opposing flag runners

That's all I can think of off the top of my head.



Funnuraba wrote:

*“Due to the metagame being “balanced”, hexes aren't really thrown around besides snares and diversions. Lately, I realized that when a target is below 25% hp, it is hard to heal the target back to health without a prot or hex on them with dwayna's kiss Usually in this case, LoD is humiliated. Had it ever been considered to use Heal Other/Jamei's Gaze over Dwayna's Kiss?”*

Heal Other used to be great in the Aegis-less metagame where a team's defense relied solely on monks. These days, there really is no contest.

As far as the situation that you described goes, your teammate is most likely going to be protted if he is getting below 25% health, powering Kiss. If it's very quick damage or a train with enchant removal, you're most likely better off going with a rof anyway. Heals are generally used for maintenance and to follow up prots, so in that kind of scenario, they don't really apply.

Funnuraba wrote:

*“With the nerf to SoD, will infuse be necessary now?”*

Perhaps.

We stopped running infuse long before SoD became popular, and it worked all the same. There's a lot more enchant removal now, though, however, you also have RC for the heal of 3059245098 after spikes.



\*Note: Text has been clipped from the original thread.  
The full thread can be found here:  
<http://www.teamquitter.com/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=2844>

